



## Remembering The Past...Eielson AFB



**June 11, 1944** – An L-5 was the first aircraft to land at Mile 26.

**June 4, 1949** – The 5010th Wing was organized and Col John L. Nedwed became the commander. The 5010th served as the host unit at Eielson until 1981.



**June 15, 1951** – The newly opened Division of Alaska on base schools conferred with base commander and President of Eielson School Board. The decision to have students in grades 9-12 sent to Fairbanks District Public High Schools was deferred and funds were made available by the US Office of Education to assure appointment of the necessary teachers in grades Kindergarten thru 12th grade. Renovation of existing temporary buildings assigned to the Chapel and family housing was used to afford space for a total of ten classrooms.



**June 30, 1952** – A total of \$44-million worth of permanent construction projects were underway: Big Hangar (pictured left), \$4-million, 58% complete, due 1 Oct 52; Power Plant \$8-million, 87% complete, due 1 Oct 52; Bulk POL Storage \$2.6-million, 24% complete, due Oct 52; Water/Sewage Treatment, \$2.1-million, 57% complete, due 1 Sep 52; Fire Station, \$395,000, 44% complete; Parachute Loft, \$55,000, 37% complete; Paint Storage \$31,450, 47% complete; Warehouse, \$300,000,

98% complete; (note: no cost available for the following entries) 41 eight-unit MFH Quarters, 20-Man BOQ, Four 75-man Barracks, Nine 200-man Barracks, Service Club, Telephone Exchange, Territorial School, and Utilidors.

**June 11, 1953** – An oil portrait of Carl Ben Eielson was presented to Col James A. Ronin, Base Commander, at the Officer's Club. Sgt Julio R. Gonzales painted it in his off-duty time. He was the technical illustrator and draftsman with base installation office. The painting is currently on display in the mezzanine area of Amber Hall.

**June 28, 1954** – Ground breaking ceremonies were held at new 300-seat Base Chapel.

**June 1, 1955** – The 58th Weather Reconnaissance Squadron completed its 1,500th Ptarmigan flight. The WB-29s began flying this track for gathering weather data above the Arctic Circle in March 1947.



1500th PTARMIGAN MISSION—Crew members shown above participated in the 1500th Ptarmigan flight last Wednesday. From left to right they are: 1st Lt. Alfano Walton, Air Commander; 1st Lt. Donald Rogers, pilot; 1st Lt. Stanley Szelesinski, navigator; 1st Lt. Oma H. Hester, navigator; 1st Lt. John Friedrich, navigator; 1st Lt. Peter Graubard, weather observer; T/Sgt. James Butler, flight engineer; S/Sgt. Duane Bradley, crew chief; A/2c Carl Moran, radio operator; A/2c Richard Tench, dropside operator; A/2c Henry C. Smith, radio operator; and guest passenger Mr. Jack Ryan of the "News-Bidder".



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**June 1, 1955** – The new Airman's Club opened in the basement of building 3112 (now Amber Hall) with a clock room, office, rest rooms, snack facilities and bar. The 2,900 square foot facility could seat 150-175 people. It was also a part of the Sergeant's Open Mess.

**June 29, 1956** – General Curtis LeMay, Commander-in-Chief Strategic Air Command, along with Maj Gen J.P. McConnell, director of Plans at Headquarters Strategic Air Command visited Eielson AFB.

**June 3, 1968** – An HH-21 helicopter from Eielson AFB crashed 54 miles east of the base while attempting to land. The six personnel on board were unharmed. The helicopter was one of two being used to transport a team from Eielson to an O-38 crash site which dated back to 1941. Approximately four days after the crash, the HH-21 was returned to Eielson by a U.S. Army CH-47 Chinook and was later returned to flying status. On June 10, the team recovered the O-38 and it was returned to Eielson as well. A few months later it was transferred to the Air Force Museum where it was restored and placed on display.



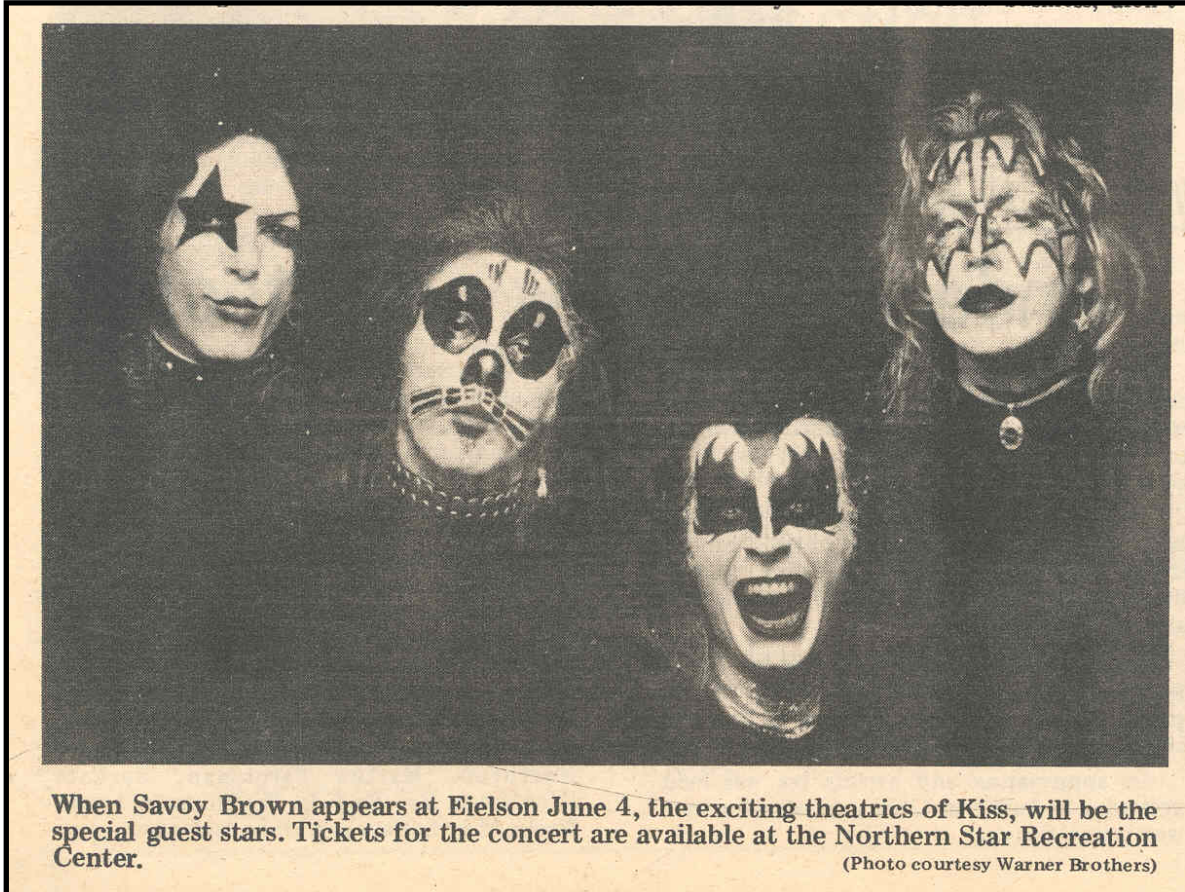
**June 5, 1969** – An RC-135, call sign Rivet Amber, assigned to Eielson's 6th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing crashed in the Bering Sea minutes after leaving Shemya Air Force Base. Nineteen crewmembers died. Amber Hall, the current headquarters building at Eielson, was named in honor of the crew exactly one-year later. A memorial to this tragedy is displayed in the main entrance to the facility. The crewmembers were Maj Charles B. Michaud, Maj Peter S. Carpenter, Maj Richard N. Martel, Capt Michael E. Mills, Maj Horace Beasely, Maj Rudolph J. Meissner Jr, Capt James F. Ray, MSgt Herbert C. Gregory, TSgt Eugene L. Benevides, TSgt Charles F. Dreher, TSgt Harvey Herbert, TSgt Lester J. Shatz, TSgt Donald F. Wonders, SSgt



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Robert W. Fox, SSgt Roy Lindsey, SSgt Richard J. Steen Jr, Sgt Douglas Arcano, Sgt Sherman Consolver Jr, and Sgt Lucian Rominiecki.



**June 4, 1974** – The rock group KISS performed at the Baker Field House. The London-based group Savoy Brown headlined the event, alternately described as the area’s “first big taste of the multi-million dollar rock industry” and “the most spectacular concert ever held in Alaska.”

**June 18-19, 1976** – Eielson hosted the 1976 Alaska Special Olympics.

**June 15, 1977** – SSgt James M. Carter III, NCOIC of the Resources Protection Section, 5010th Security Police Squadron was named one of the Air Force’s 12 Outstanding Airman of the Year for 1976.

**June 17-28, 1991** – Exercise COPE THUNDER North, sponsored by the Commander-in-Chief Pacific Air Forces, occurred at Eielson and Elmendorf Air Forces. Deployments to Eielson included four KC-135s, 3 KC-10s, and one HH-3 along with 355 personnel. This was the first COPE THUNDER exercise conducted outside the Republic of the Philippines.